



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Pat Quinn, Governor  
Marc Miller, Director

## Drought Response Task Force Agency Report July 23, 2012

### Office of Land Management

Due to Extremely Dry Conditions, most state parks in Illinois have implemented an "open fire ban" until further notice. Swimming has been closed at Lake LeAquaNa and Wolf Creek Beach due to low water levels and algae. Concerns for an extended drought conditions include access to boat ramps and being able to fill water fowl areas in the fall.

### Office of Resource Conservation

#### *Division of Fisheries*

Many fish kills reported statewide including the Mississippi, Rock, Fox, Kankakee, DesPlaines, Embarras, Little Wabash, Vermillion (tributary to the Illinois), Illinois, and Sangamon Rivers along with Sugar and Spring Creeks. Fish kills have also been reported on the following lakes: Sugar Creek Lake, Rend Lake Sailboat Harbor, Powerton Lake, LaSalle Lake, Braidwood Lake, Heidecke Lake, Sangchris Lake, and Clinton Lake along with some private ponds. There has been a substantial loss of mussels in the Fox River and some in the Kankakee River. As many stranded live mussels as possible were collected and moved to deeper water. The list of specific sites is attached. This trend may continue and even get worse if the drought and heat continues:

#### *Division of Forestry*

The Fire Warden Law allows IDNR to enact wardens at very high or extreme fire danger upon request of Regional Forester in seven southern most counties: Jackson, Pope, Hardin, Johnson, Union, Alexander, and Pulaski. The National Fire Danger Rating for Southern Illinois is at low to moderate danger rating this week. The other 92 counties must handle the regulation of fire bans or permits themselves.

Numerous calls have been received about dying trees. Trees with insect/disease/ or health problems are at high risk and regular watering should be considered to mitigate this stress on at-risk trees. Projects under the Illinois Forestry Development Act may be eligible for assistance with re-forestation plantings.

#### *Division of Private Lands and Watersheds*

Numerous calls have been received about failures of planting on Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) properties. Cost sharing opportunities may be available to replant these properties. Calls for emergency grazing on CREP properties could be made by the FSA on as-needed basis. The grazing would be detrimental to the CREP properties.

### Office of Law Enforcement

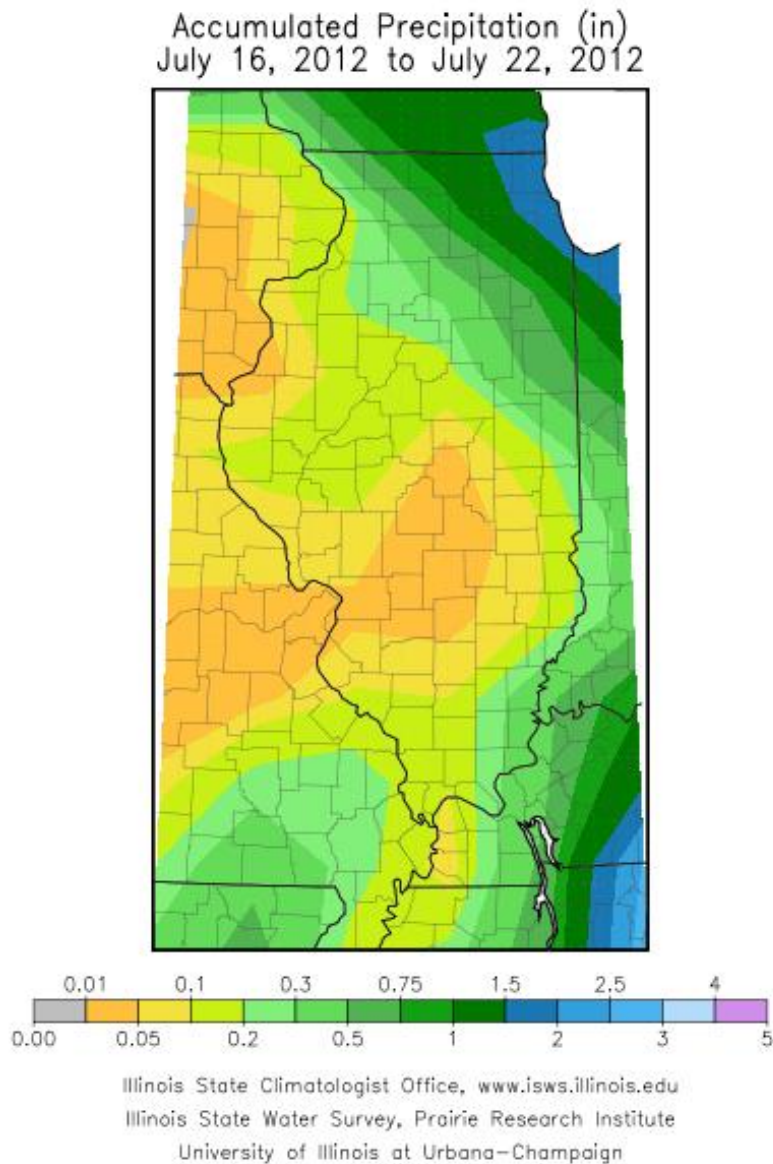
Conservation Police have responded to fish kills and fire at Illinois Beach State Park. Inquiries have been received about restricting boating due to low water levels. OLE has never restricted boating for low water and is not considering low flow boating restrictions at this time.

### Office of Water Resources

We are monitoring permitted water withdrawals from Public Waters to ensure compliance with the permit limits. Power plants in Braidwood and Kendall County may be impacted by their permitted limit of usage of Public Waters. The following graphic shows the amount of rain received in the past 7 days. With the rainfall last week, the Public Waters in northern Illinois have risen above levels where water withdrawals would be restricted. However, this rise in stream flows will be short term, i.e. 1 – 2 weeks.

Several inquiries have been received about temporary water withdrawal for irrigation uses on Kankakee, LaMoine, and Illinois Rivers and other public waters. Reports have been received about non-riparian owners using the Public Waters without obtaining a permit.

Sinnissippi Dam on the Rock River is operating at the normal summer pool. Stratton Dam which maintains water levels in the Chain of Lakes is currently operating at the lower end of normal summer pool thanks to the rainfall last week. Minimum flow release is being maintained.



### Statewide report of fish Kills July 16-22

There has been a substantial loss of mussels in the Fox River and some in the Kankakee River. As many stranded live mussels as possible were collected and moved to deeper water. Due to time and man-power constraints these mussels were not counted or identified

Drought related fish die-offs appear to have ceased for now in northeastern IL but the conditions are still very precarious with all rivers but the DuPage and Des Plaines near or at record low flows. Note below the current flow compared to the median flow for this time of year:

The Fox River at Montgomery: currently 260 cubic feet per second (cfs) - median flow for July is ~800 - 900 cfs

The Fox was at 110 cfs during the fish kill early this month. Following rains in the upper watershed last week, flow rose to over 600 cfs, but has receded to 260 cfs today.

Fox River at Dayton: currently 383 cfs - median flow is ~800 - 900 cfs

Dayton fell to a low of 123 cfs on July 9, which is a historic low for that date, and possibly over-all low flow.

Kankakee River: currently 669 cfs - median flow is ~2000 cfs. The river rose this weekend from low flows of ~400cfs.

DesPlaines River: currently 253 cfs - median flow ~250-300 cfs

Dupage River: currently 100 cfs. median is ~ 80cfs

The Dupage is the only river that has not experienced severely reduced flows this July.

5 private ponds in west central Illinois

4 private ponds in the Peoria/Galesburg area

4 private ponds in the Charleston area reported

1 private pond in southwestern Illinois

1 pond near Bloomington and 1 near Danville

Large fish kill below the spillway at Lake Decatur- mostly Asian carp

### Statewide Report of Fish Kills July 9-15

Mississippi River, northern Illinois pools- minor kill of game fish including muskies and northern pike

Rock River, Sterling- minor kill of game fish including northern pike and muskies

Fox River, Aurora- hundreds of dead fish- mostly sucker species and a few dead muskies and northern pike.

Fox River, Silver Springs to Montgomery- hundreds of fish, again, mostly sucker species and a few muskies and northern pike

Kankakee River- Kankakee to Wilmington- numerous sucker species and a few muskies

DesPlaines River- Riverside/Lyons- a few sucker species and 2 muskies

Kendall County Forest Preserve District, Harris pond- substantial kill involving largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie

Sugar Creek Lake in the Shawnee Forest (USFS) - a substantial kill with several thousand dead fish- largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish

Private ponds and lakes in the Metro East area- 7 kills reported to the biologist

Rend Lake Sailboat Harbor- dozens of dead largemouth bass, tournament mortality. Too hot during the tournament.

Embarras River- Lawrenceville- hundreds of dead fish between the Rt. 1 and the Highway 50 bridges- gizzard shad, flathead catfish, buffalo and sucker species.

Embarras River- Charleston- Many mussel beds have dried up leading to a mussel die-off

Little Wabash river- 20 miles South of Effingham. Hundreds of dead fish

Little Wabash River- south of Mt. Erie

Little Wabash River- Wynyoose- Hundreds of dead fish

Vermillion River- Streator- thousands of dead fish just below the dam. Many were asian carp  
Illinois River Backwater - Bartonville- Mendenhall Road Wetlands- Severe fish kill. Many asian carp  
Illinois River Backwater- Rice Lake- Minor fish kill  
Spring Creek Backwater- north Springfield- major kill on a small backwater pond  
Sugar Creek- Sangamon Co. minor kill- all species  
6 reported private pond fish kills in the west Peoria/Galesburg area  
Powerton Lake- Tazewell County- Severe fish kill, tens of thousands of dead fish. Many shad, largemouth and smallmouth bass, hybrid striped bass, channel catfish  
LaSalle Lake- Hundreds of dead fish  
Braidwood Lake- minor kill  
Heidecke Lake- minor kill  
Sangchris Lake- substantial kill of largemouth bass, striped bass, white bass, shad, channel catfish and flathead catfish  
Clinton Lake- substantial kill of hybrid striped bass, largemouth bass, shad channel catfish and flathead catfish  
Old hatchery pond, Village of Spring Grove- 100 dead largemouth bass